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DCI/IS 73-1152

19 SEP 1973

73-5820

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Executive Secretary, CIA Management
Committee

FROM : Deputy Director for Management
and Services

SUBJECT : Proposal for Declassification and
Release of Selected Agency Publications
and Histories

1. Action Requested: It is requested that you approve a plan to increase the amount of information made available to the public. The plan outlined below represents an effort to meet two objectives which, on the surface, may appear to be mutually contradictory--i. e., to be more forthcoming in releasing information and, at the same time, to protect intelligence sources and methods. Inasmuch as the plan constitutes an initial attempt to formulate a program along these lines, it should be regarded as tentative in nature and subject to modification as experience is gained.

2. Background: You have advised the Congress of your intent that the Agency be responsive to the public's right to be informed, while, at the same time, vigilant in the protection of intelligence sources and methods. The clear requirement to protect sources and methods severely limits Agency options in releasing information and dictates a conservative approach; information once released cannot be recalled, and it is imperative that nothing be done to cause sources to lose confidence in the Agency's discretion. For this reason, operational traffic, other

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MCA-60

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60

correspondence, plans, raw information reports, and documents incorporating data from sensitive collection systems have been eliminated from consideration. Further, it is not proposed to include estimative intelligence products in this program. The Agency's finished intelligence publications remain, and it is these which would probably hold the most interest for the general public. In addition to the various series of Agency publications, Agency histories, particularly those which chronicle the Agency's role in connection with specific events, would also be of interest and value to the American public. The proposal, therefore, calls for the establishment of a program for the release to the public in unclassified form of selected Agency finished intelligence publications and episodic histories. Separate plans are advanced for the two types of documents.

The plan for releasing finished intelligence publications calls for each production office to conduct a systematic review of its products in order to identify publications appropriate for release. The prime criterion for release would be the impact of such an action upon national security. If it is determined that this test is met, other criteria would come into play: potential public interest; timeliness of the information; quality of the product; whether clearances from other agencies would be required; etc. It can be assumed that the number chosen for release will be very limited. It is proposed that each production component review at the end of each calendar year all publications which it produced over the preceding five-year period. To the extent that the producing office can at the time of publication fix a definite date or event for the declassification of the report, the review task will be simplified. Those publications which in the judgment of the originating office can be declassified and are otherwise suitable for public release shall be forwarded to the Chief of the Information Systems Analysis Staff by 31 January of each year, and he shall be responsible for arranging for their review by the CIA Information Review Committee. For those publications in which the Committee concurs in their release, the documents shall be reprinted with a new cover, all classification markings and coordination statements having been deleted. If the author is overt and he so desires, he shall be identified and, if appropriate, a few of his scholarly credentials noted. Subject to the approval of his office, the originating component shall also be cited. The version thus sanitized shall be released through the Document

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Expediting (DOCEX) Project of the Library of Congress, a channel which the Agency now utilizes for the release and distribution of selected unclassified reference aids.

The plan for the preparation and release of unclassified episodic histories is patterned after a technique successfully employed by the Historical Office of the Atomic Energy Commission. As applied to the Agency, it would entail having an Agency historian collect all pertinent documents and write an all-source history. The history would be coordinated like all other Agency histories. On the basis of this all-source history, the same Agency historian, upon the recommendation of the Chief of the Historical Staff and subject to the concurrence of the CIA Information Review Committee, would then prepare an unclassified version, with all pertinent documents. The two versions with their documentation would then be submitted to a panel of historical consultants composed of five to seven professional historians of "recognized competence" who had been fully cleared for Agency employment. This panel would render an opinion on the value and accuracy of the unclassified version. Consideration would be given for the inclusion of minority dissents or caveats in the unclassified version, provided, of course, that such measures did not disclose sources or methods appearing in the classified version. If the panel so recommended, the history would then be reproduced in the requisite number of copies and distributed through the facilities of DOCEX. No histories currently available should be considered for declassification and release at this time. The preparation of unclassified versions, however, should be considered for histories now in the process of compilation or programmed for future production.

Obviously, both the unclassified histories and the declassified finished intelligence products could be made available to Congressional watchdog committees and/or deposited in the National Archives simultaneously with their release through DOCEX.

3. Staff Position:

4. Recommendation: That approval be given to a plan calling for the systematic review, effective January 1974, of intelligence publications for the purpose of possible declassification and release through DOCEX, such plan to be incorporated into Agency regulations; and that approval also be given to a plan for the preparation of unclassified Agency histories and their publication and release through DOCEX, subject to the recommendation of a panel of historical consultants and approval by the CIA Information Review Committee, such plan also to be incorporated into Agency regulations.

/s/ Harold L. Brownman

HAROLD L. BROWNMEN
Deputy Director
for
Management and Services

APPROVED: _____

DISAPPROVED: _____

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